

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 271221Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3542

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MOGADISCIO 0153

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, SO, ET, FR

SUBJECT: SIAD APPEALS FOR US DIPLOMATIC HELP IN DJIBOUTI

1. IN MY CONVERSATION WITH SIAD ON JANUARY 27, LATTER MADE APPEAL FOR US DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT IN RESOLVING QUESTION OF FUTURE OF FRENCH TERRITORY OF AFARS AND ISSAS (TFAI). HE ASKED THAT PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY BE GIVEN HIS ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION AND THAT WASHINGTON SEEK PERSUADE PARIS THAT GOF'S CURRENT DECOLONIZATION COURSE WHICH WOULD TRANSFER AUTHORITY TO FRENCH PUPPET ALI AREF WOULD RESULT IN QTE ANOTHER ANGOLA UNQTE IN HORN OF AFRICA. HE SAID THAT THERE WERE AT THIS MOMENT QTE THOUSAND UPON THOUSANDS UNQTE OF SOMALI FREEDOM FLIGHTERS IN NORTH WAITING TO CROSS INTO TFAI IN EVENT AFAR LEADER ALI AREF HEADED NEW INDEPENDENT TFAI STATE.

2. SAID ASKED THAT I GIVE PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY HIS SOLEMN PROMISE THAT SOMALIA DID NOT RPT NOT INTEND TO ANNEX TFAI. HE WOULD ALSO PROMISE TO WORK WITH FRENCH TO MAINTAIN FRENCH ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN INDEPENDENCT TERRITORY AND TO PROVIDE ETHIOPIA WITH IRON-CLAD AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD FULLY PROTECT ETHIOPIA'S PORT AND RAILWAY ACCESS IN DJIBOUTI. WHEN I ASKED SIAD IF HE WERE WILLING TO PROVIDE GOF WITH GUARANTEE OF INDEPENDENCE OF NEW TFAI GOVERNMENT, HE SAID HE WOULD GUARANTEE IT QTE TWO HUNDRED PERCENT UNQTE. ALL THAT HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT WANTED WAS THAT NEW GOVERNMENT REPRESENT WILL OF MAJORITY IN TFAI THROUGH REFERENDUM WHICH GENUINELY REFLECTED POPULAR VOTE IN TERRITORY.

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3. WHEN I RECALLED FOR SIAD FIVE POINTS WHICH HE HAD DEMANDED OF GISCARD D'ESTAING IN DECEMBER AS PRELIMINARY CONDITIONS FOR TFAI'S INDEPENDENCE (I.E., A) DISSOLUTION OF TERRITORIAL ASSEMBLY; B) REMOVAL OF ALL FRENCH FORCES; C) RETURN OF SOMALI REFUGEES; D) REMOVAL OF BARBED WIRE FENCE AND MINE FIELD AROUND DJIBOUTI ITSELF; AND E) CONVENING OF CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY REPRESENTING ALL LIB MOVEMENTS AND POLITICAL PARTIES) AND ASKED IF THESE STILL APPLIED, SIAD HESITATED A MOMENT AND SAID THAT WHAT HE WAS PROPOSING NOW WAS SOMETHING DIFFERENT. HE REPEATED HIS EARLIER CLAIM THAT ALL SOMALIA WANTED WAS AN HONEST REFERENDUM WHICH WOULD GIVE INDEPENDENCE TO TFAI AND END POSSIBILITY OF BLOODSHED IN HORN SHOULD ALI AREF BE MANEUVERED INTO POWER BY GOF.

4. REGARDING FRENCH MILITARY PRESENCE, HE SAID THAT FOR PARIS TO REPLACE ITS DJIBOUTI CADRES FROM MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS TERRITORIES WITH THOSE FROM MINDEFENSE WAS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE. HE SUGGESTED THAT IF A GENUINELY ELECTED INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENT WANTED HOWEVER TO GIVE FRENCH NAVY QTE FACILITIES UNQTE, SDR WOULD POSE NO OBJECTION AND WOULD HONOR TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF NEW STATE.

5. WHEN I ASKED SIAD IF HE HAD TABLED HIS DJIBOUTI PROPOSALS WITH PMAC CHM TEFERI BANTI DURING THEIR RECENT TALKS IN ADDIS FOLLOWING OAU SUMMIT, SIAD SAID THAT HE HAD SENT QTE FOUR SECRET MISSIONS UNQTE TO ETHIOPIA WITHIN LAST YEAR TO TALK TO PMAC BUT THAT PMAC POWER POSITION SO PRECARIOUS, INTERNAL DIVISIONS SO DEEP, AND SUSPICION OF SOMALIA SO INTENSE THAT NOTHING HAD BEEN ACCOMPLISHED. AT 1974 OAU SUMMIT IN KAMPALA, HE HAD SPECIFICALLY RAISED TFAI QUESTION WITH BANTI BUT WITHOUT RESULTS.

6. DIGRESSING FOR MOMENT ON ETHIOPIA, SIAD SAID PMAC NOT RPT NOT IN CONTROL OF ETHIOPIA AND POWER VACUUM EXISTS IN ADDIS ITSELF. HE CLAIMED THAT SOMALIA COULD EASILY STIR UP TROUBLES FOR ETHIOPIA IN OGADEN AND ELSEWHERE IF IT SO DESIRED AND ETHIOPIA WOULD BE UNABLE TO COPE WITH CONSEQUENCES. BUT SDR HAD NO RPT NO WISH TO ADD TO ETHIOPIA'S WOES AT PRESENT AND BRING ON GREATER INSTABILITY IN HORN OF AFRICA.

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7. REGARDING SOMALIA'S OWN DIFFICULTIES, SIAD SAID HE WAS FACED WITH VERY SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AT PRESENT, AS I KNEW, AND SOMALIA SIMPLY COULD NOT RPT NOT AFFORD A SERIOUS SKIRMISH EITHER IN TFAI OR IN OGADEN. CLAIMS THAT SOMALIA HAD ITS EYE ON DJIBOUTI FOR ITS PORT ADVANTAGES OR FOR STRATEGIC POSITION IT MIGHT OFFER SOVIET UNION ASTRIDE BAB EL MANDAB WERE ALSO NONSENSE. SOMALIA WAS DEVELOPING BERBERA AS ITS NORTHERN PORT AND HAD NO NEED FOR DJIBOUTI. MOREOVER,

LOGIC WOULD PERSUADE ANYONE -- EXCEPT AMHARA XENOPHOBES IN
ADDIS -- THAT SINCE DJIBOUTI'S ECONOMIC WELFARE DERIVED
FROM ITS COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES AS AN ENTREPOT FOR ETHIOPIA,
IT WOULD BE FOOLISH FOR SDR TO ATTEMPT TO DENY DJIBOUTI TO
ADDIS -- A DENIAL WHICH COULD ONLY MEAN ECONOMIC CHAOS IN
TFAI ITSELF.

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3543

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 MOGADISCIO 0153

EXDIS

8. SIAD ALSO SAID THAT LEADERS OF SOMALI COAST LIBERATION
FRONT -- GULAIID AND DINI IN PARTICULAR -- WERE QTE MORE
FRENCH THAN FRENCH THEMSELVES UNQTE AND HAD EVERY INTENTION OF
MAINTAINING ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL TIES WITH GOF. SOMALIA
WOULD REINFORCE THAT DETERMINATION AND WORK ON BEHALF OF
FRENCH INTERESTS.

9. IN CONCLUSION, SIAD SAID THAT US HAD RESPONSIBILITY TO
HELP MAINTAIN PEACE IN REGION. PEACE IN HORN WAS NOW BEING
SERIOUSLY JEOPARDIZED BY FRENCH INTENTIONS TO TRANSFER
POWER TO NON-REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT HEADED BY ALI AREF.
HE URGED THAT US USE IT INFLUENCE WITH GOF TO HELP AVERT
REPETITION OF ANGOLAN DISORDERS IN WHICH GREAT POWERS WOULD
INEVITABLY BECOME INVOLVED.

10. COMMENT: SOMALIA AND SIAD HAVE BEEN OBSESSED EITH TFAI
PROBLEM OVER PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, ALMOST TO EXCLUSION OF
EVERY OTHER FOREIGN POLICY CONCERN. WHILE SIAD MAY BE SERIOUSLY
OVERSTATING SDR READINESS OR ITS CAPACITY TO MOVE AGAINST
TFAI, AS WELL AS APTNESS OF ANGOLAN PARALLEL, FUTURE OF TFAI
IS NOW MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM CONFRONTING NATIONS IN HORN
AND IT WILL REMAIN A CASUS BELLI UNTIL SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE

TO ADDIS, MOGADISCIO AND GOF IS SOMEHOW FOUND.
HAMRICK

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